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INDIA.

Report from Calcutta—Topography and sanitary conditions.

CALCUTTA, INDIA, October 7, 1903.

SIR: I have the honor to report that Calcutta is a city of about 1,000,000 inhabitants situated 60 miles from the Bay of Bengal on the Hoogli River, 23 feet above the sea level. It is to the west of the numerous branches or mouths of the Ganges, and there are several rivers near at hand to the westward. Located thus in what comes near being a swamp, with the high degree of heat, the relative humidity ranges near the point of saturation. Stone piers have been constructed along the Calcutta or east side of the river at intervals for 4 or 5 miles beside which vessels may lie, and off against them are numerous buoys to which vessels are anchored. The docking facilities are limited when compared with the large number of boats—five to ten sailing daily—hence the majority load and unload in open bay.

For the fiscal year ended June 30, 1903, 43 bills of health were issued to vessels bound for American ports. I understand that it has been the custom for the consul-general, who at the time of my arrival was absent on vacation and has not yet returned, to visit the vessel in company with the chief health officer for this port and after inspection to give the bill of health.

In accordance with agreements entered into at the Vienna Conference, every vessel leaving Calcutta is inspected as to its general cleanliness, its cargo, its food and water supply, and the personnel of its crew. The temperature of all suspicious individuals is taken, and a rise above 99° F. is sufficient for rejection. The clothing and effects of all "lascars"—i.e., native sailors—are disinfected by steam, and after the inspection, which usually occurs the day previous to sailing, a guard is established to prevent departure from the ship. * * *

All vessels, whether or not bound for British ports, are treated exactly alike. Rat protectors are not used on the docking lines, but I am informed that an order is about to be issued for their employment. Rats are destroyed on none of the boats except those bound for Australian ports. The lines of these boats have rat protectors and their captains request their destruction aboard ship, because without a certificate of the enforcement of the above precautions they would be delayed by quarantine at all Australian ports.

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It must be acknowledged that the precautions taken here are excellent with the two exceptions previously mentioned, one of which will soon be overcome, and my impression is that before long we will be killing the rats on boats bound for American ports. The matter may require more or less diplomatic handling, but I think now it can be accomplished. It would be very simple if I could assure the captains that otherwise they would encounter delays at our ports.

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The claim is made that as yet no vessel from Calcutta has conveyed plague or cholera.

The disinfection of the clothing and effects of European sailors is not considered necessary, because their haunts are altogether differently situated from those of the natives, and they are not classed as

infected. How true this may be I am not yet prepared to say, but as my knowledge of the city extends I hope to be able to speak with more positiveness.

Almost all of our vessels clear for New York or Boston, very few going direct to our dependencies, this traffic being carried on by transshipment.

The water supply is taken from the Hoogli River, some 5 or 6 miles above the city, and in my opinion its purity is open to question, although the European population does not suffer from cholera. The disease is constantly present and if the water is not infected it must be conveyed by more or less direct personal contact. It can be readily understood how from the filthy habits of the natives this could occur.

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Respectfully,

E. K. SPRAGUE,
Passed Assistant Surgeon.

The SURGEON-GENERAL.

ITALY.

Report from Naples—Plague in Mauritius.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Eager reports as follows: Week ended October 24, 1903, the following ships were inspected at Naples and Palermo:

NAPLES.

Date.	Name of ship.	Destination.	Steerage passengers inspected and passed.	Pieces of large baggage inspected and passed.	Pieces of baggage disinfected.	Number of steerage passengers recommended for rejection.
Oct. 23	Sicilian Prince.....	New York.....	593	122	772	12
23	Regina Elena.....	do.....	0	0	0	0

PALERMO.

Oct. 24	Sicilian Prince.....	New York.....	503	160	650	48
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Bubonic plague in Mauritius.

A telegram from the governor of Mauritius states that during the week ended October 15 there were 88 cases of bubonic plague in the island, with 54 deaths.

Week ended October 31, 1903, the following ships were inspected at Naples:

Date.	Name of ship.	Destination.	Steerage passengers inspected and passed.	Pieces of large baggage inspected and passed.	Pieces of baggage disinfected.	Number of steerage passengers recommended for rejection.
Oct. 28	Sardegna.....	New York.....	863	160	1,230	11
28	Hesperia.....	do.....	658	60	1,022	7
30	Giacomo P.....	do.....				
30	Hohenzollern.....	do.....	868	160	1,340	20